

September 21st

Wycombe v St. Albans

# WYCOMBE FAIL TO CRACK CITY BARRIER

## MATCH DETAILS

Wycombe Wanderers: J. Maskell; L. Temel, S. Thompson, I. Rundle, C. Gale; B. Baker, D. Thomas, J. Lailey; L. Worley, K. Samuels, A. Horseman, Sub.: V. Busby.

St. Albans City: R. Whiteaker; M. Harman, D. Lawrence, P. Wood, L. Burgess; D. Neville, W. Ratty, D. Gibbs; R. Childs, J. Butterfield, W. Broomfield, Sub.: J. Mann.

Corners — Wycombe 3, St. Albans 6.

Free-kicks (conceded) — Wycombe 4, St. Albans 10.

Referee — Mr. W. South (Uxbridge).

F.A. CUP  
SPECIALS

*"We did not play well as a team. Certainly St. Albans came here for a draw."*

—Barry Darvill,  
Wycombe Wanderers'  
manager-coach



St. Albans goalkeeper, Whiteaker, lies clutching the ball and his ribs following his brave save at the feet of Horseman. Also in the picture is Wanderers' captain, Keith Samuels.

The one obvious factor to emerge from Saturday's F.A. Cup first qualifying round encounter at Loakes Park was the need for the forwards to wrest the initiative from close marking defenders.

As the home team, the onus was on Wanderers to carry the fight to St. Albans. This they did — first with a 4-3-3 formation and later on through a 4-2-4 system but neither tactical ploy managed to pierce a solid St. Albans defence.

While Wycombe dictated the tempo St. Albans defended stubbornly with disciplined and precise football, relying on the rare breakaway to cause consternation to the Wanderers' rearguard.

Up front, Wanderers were disjointed, lacking in any form

of cohesion and understanding. Every time they did threaten, commendable — Wood always plugged the gaps and if he was not available then the excellent Whiteaker used his safe pair of hands to snuff out the danger.

However, while St. Albans deserved their draw, on the run of play Wanderers had enough clear-cut opportunities to make Thursday's journey unnecessary. Three of Wycombe's brightest chances fell to Keith

Samuels but it was not to be a captain's day.

For the opening 15 minutes

the teams probed for possible

weakness and even in this short

space of time it soon became

evident that something extra

special would be required to

break down the stranglehold

grip applied by both defences.

After 20 minutes a suicidal

pass-back by Worley nearly cost

Wycombe and Childs read

the situation well and inter-

cepted but fortunately his shot

on the run was wide.

Wycombe replied swiftly as

Whiteaker was forced to make

an inspired save at the feet of

Samuels to prevent a certain

score.

Wanderers' full-backs Lou

Temel and Charlie Gale used

the overlap movement intelli-

gently. Gale had more op-

portunities than Whiteaker, rather

because of St. Albans' 4-3-3

policy he was often left free

without a man to mark.

From one of the Wanderers'

two corners in the first 45

minutes Wycombe easily passed

up the best scoring opening of

the entire match.

Worley's kick was met by

Horseman who headed down to

Samuels and he failed to hook

the ball into the net from three

yards, allowing the relieved

Whiteaker to rescue his side.

Only on odd occasions had St. Albans allowed themselves the luxury of moving on to the offensive. Generally their attacks were confined to outside Wycombe's 18-yard box, thanks mainly to the no-nonsense tackling of Ian Rundle.

However, goalkeeper John Maskell had to be on the alert for longer. A minute before the break, Rundle beat his normal mid-field duties to go forward and fire in a searching 20-yard drive which brought a superb flying save from Maskell, who did extremely well to keep possession as Butterfield followed up.

Play in the second half deteriorated rapidly with the result that the football became disorganised and scrappy. St. Albans still kept the emphasis very much on defence leaving only two players lurking for the half chance. Some five minutes after the half-time interval was blantly held in the penalty area by Maskell following a misunderstanding between keeper and Temel.

While the St. Albans contingent in the crowd were howling for a penalty the referee, whose decisions at times often mystified everyone, awarded a free-kick in Wycombe's favour after consulting his linesman, who had previously given Childs offside.

Quiet Tony

Little was seen of Wycombe's ace striker, Tony Horseman. He was prominent in one good move when latching onto Worley's astute through pass. Horseman's curling shot was beautifully plucked down by Whiteaker.

At this stage with Wanderers' workrate noticeably dropping they reverted to 4-2-4 with Julian Lailey coming back to operate the sweeper role with Stuart Thompson moving forward to join the front runners,

Whiteaker pulled off a brave save when Horseman's fee following nice approach work between Worley and Thompson. The keeper fell awkwardly on Horseman's feet and could only continue after treatment to his ribs.

Just four minutes from time Worley made a determined run and whipped over a cross which Samuels nodded into the path of Horseman and his drive from five yards out looked to be on target until Wood stepped from nowhere to silence the goal-line beginning to crescendo from the terraces.

*Both sides must gamble*

*reports Patrick Vercoe*

Half-Time 0-0